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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

DETAILED ACTION

1. This action is responsive to the communication filed on December 02, 2009. Claim 11 has been cancelled. Claims 1 and 18 have been amended. Claims 1-10 and 12-22 are pending.
2. Applicants' arguments filed December 02, 2009 have been fully considered but they are not deemed to be persuasive. Rejections and/or objections not reiterated from previous office actions are hereby withdrawn. The following rejections and/or objections are either reiterated or newly applied. They constitute the complete set presently being applied to the instant application.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

4. Claims 1-10 and 13-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by Babula (US 2003/0061071 A1 hereinafter, "Babula").
5. With respect to claim 1,

Babula discloses a system for automatically providing a user with at least one potential solution to a problem associated with a medical device (Babula paragraphs

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0001, 0009 and 0039 e.g. making problem and solution information readily available to a system user, for easily searching such information, and for transmitting search results to the diagnostic system [as providing a user with at least one potential solution to a problem associated with a medical device], such as a scanner console or departmental PC where the user can then implement them; and the solutions may then be downloaded or transmitted automatically or upon request by the institution; and an automated service unit 136 may also be included in the service facility for automatically responding to certain service requests [as automatically providing]], comprising:

a server system configured to receive data automatically transmitted from a medical device (Babula paragraphs 0015 and 0029 e.g. FIG. 6 is an exemplary user interface page incorporated in the diagnostic system for placing service requests, and sending and receiving service data between the diagnostic system and a remote service facility; and problem-solution information exchanges may be completely automated for locating information needed to address specific problems or questions encountered by the user [as a server system (e.g. a remote service facility) configured to receive data automatically (e.g. completely automated) transmitted from a medical device (e.g. the diagnostic system)]), the server system comprising:

a first database containing historic data (Babula paragraphs 0032 and 0042 e.g. at least one local service database 102 is provided for accessing problem-solution information, verifying license and contract arrangements, storing service record files, log files, and so forth); and historic log information [as a first database containing historic data]) for a plurality of medical devices related to the medical device (Babula

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paragraphs 0024-0026 and Fig. 1 e.g. MRI system 14, CT system 16, and ultrasound system 18 [as a plurality of medical devices] in Fig. 1);

a second database containing a plurality of solutions to problems associated with the plurality of medical devices (Babula paragraph 0032 e.g. In the diagram of FIG. 2, operator workstations 86 are coupled to the processing system, as are remote databases or computers 88, including the problem-solution database [as a second database containing a plurality of solutions to problems with the plurality of medical devices]. In addition, at least one local service database 102 is provided for accessing problem-solution information, verifying license and contract arrangements, storing service record files, log files, and so forth); and

an application service provider that directs the server system to use the data from the medical device to automatically search the first database for historic data for the medical device (Babula paragraphs 0032 and 0029 e.g. processing system 84 [as the server system] receives and processes the service requests and data [as to use the data from the medical device], and interfaces with additional service components, both at the service facility and remote from the facility ... at least one local service database 102 is provided for accessing problem-solution information, verifying license and contract arrangements, storing service record files, log files, and so forth [as automatically search the first database for historical data for the medical device], and problem-solution information exchanges may be completely automated for locating information [as to automatically search the first database] needed to address specific problems or questions encountered by the user) and to automatically search the second

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database for at least one potential solution to a problem associated with the medical device using the data from the medical device and the historic data for the medical device (Babula paragraph 0032 and Fig. 2 e.g. processing system 84 [as the server system] receives and processes the service requests and data [as to use the data from the medical device], and interfaces with additional service components, both at the service facility and remote from the facility. In the diagram of FIG. 2, operator workstations 86 are coupled to the processing system, as are remote databases or computers 88, including the problem-solution database [as search the second database for at least one potential solution to a problem associated with the medical device]. In addition, at least one local service database 102 is provided for accessing problem-solution information, verifying license and contract arrangements, storing service record files, log files, and so forth [as using the historic data for the medical device]).

6. With respect to claim 2,

Babula further discloses wherein the application service provider directs the server system to use the data from the medical device to automatically search the first database for keywords (Babula paragraph 0008 e.g. entering key words and phrases for a query) associated with the medical device.

7. With respect to claim 3,

Babula further discloses wherein the application service provider directs the server system to automatically search the second database for at least one potential solution to a problem associated with the medical device using the keywords (Babula paragraph 0052 e.g. summarizes the key words and phrases that the user entered for

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the search as well as the number solutions located and the status of the search) obtained from the first database and the data from the medical device.

8. With respect to claim 4,

Babula further discloses wherein the application service provider directs the server system to automatically perform the searches of the first database and the second database in response to a service request (Babula paragraph 0032 e.g. processing system 84 receives and processes the service requests and data) transmitted to the server system.

9. With respect to claim 5,

Babula further discloses wherein the service request is transmitted to the server system from the medical device (Babula paragraph 0014 e.g. FIG. 6 is an exemplary user interface page incorporated in the diagnostic system for placing service requests).

10. With respect to claim 6,

Babula further discloses wherein the server system transmits (Babula paragraph 0033 e.g. Such web pages permit problem queries and service requests to be composed and transmitted to the remote service facility, and facilitate the exchange of problem-solution data, messages) the at least one potential solution to a problem associated with the medical device to the medical device.

11. With respect to claim 7,

Babula further discloses wherein the service request is transmitted to the server system from a remote computer (Babula paragraph 0043 e.g. Such applications may permit the field service engineer to address service requests at the diagnostic system

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site, or remote from the site as required, and transmit service messages and updates via the remote field service unit).

12. With respect to claim 8,

Babula further discloses wherein the server system transmits the at least one potential solution to a problem associated with the medical device to the remote computer (Babula paragraph 0027 e.g. The management system may include a computer workstation or personal computer 72 coupled to the system controllers in an intranet configuration, in a file sharing configuration, a client/server arrangement, or in any other suitable manner. Moreover, management station 70 will typically include a monitor 74 for viewing system operational parameters, analyzing system utilization, and exchanging service requests and data between the facility 20 and the service facility 22).

13. With respect to claim 9,

Babula further discloses
automatically sending data from a remote (Babula paragraphs 0029 and 0043 e.g. problem-solution information exchanges may be completely automated for locating information needed to address specific problems or questions encountered by the user; and Such applications may permit the field service engineer to address service requests at the diagnostic system site, or remote from the site as required, and transmit service messages and updates via the remote field service unit) medical device to a service center comprising a database of potential solutions to a problem associated with at least one remote medical device;

automatically searching the database of potential solutions for at least one potential solution to a problem associated with the remote medical device in response to one of a request for service and the data from the remote medical device (Babula paragraph 0047 and Fig. 7 e.g. With the system state remaining at its condition just prior to accessing the service request page, image data files, log files, error files, and so forth may be identified, captured, stored and transmitted to the service facility for evaluation of potential problems in the diagnostic system), comprising automatically searching a database comprising historic data for a plurality of medical devices related to the remote medical device for keywords (Babula paragraph 0008 e.g. entering key words and phrases for a query) associated with the remote medical device for use in searching the database of potential solutions; and

sending the at least one potential solution to a problem associated with the remote medical device from the service center to a service provider via a communications network (Babula paragraph 0039 e.g. other network or communications schemes may be provided for enabling the service facility to communicate and exchange data and messages with diagnostic systems and remote service units).

14. With respect to claim 10,

Babula further discloses wherein sending a request for service of a remote medical device comprises sending data to enable the service center to identify (Babula paragraph 0055 e.g. This data preferably includes an identification of the system and/or

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system configuration to facilitate addressing the inquiry, such as to provide system-specific solutions) the remote medical device from a plurality of remote medical devices.

15. With respect to claim 13,

The limitations therein have substantially the same scope as claim 9 because claim 13 is a system claim for implementing those methods of claim 9. Therefore claim 13 is rejected for at least the same reasons as claim 9.

16. With respect to claim 14,

Babula further discloses a processor-based device (Babula paragraph 0044 e.g. Finally, the field service units may comprise personal computers or laptop computers of any suitable processor platform).

19. With respect to claim 15,

Babula further discloses programming instructions to enable the processor-based device to automatically perform a search of a database of medical device data in response to the data automatically transmitted (Babula paragraphs 0009, 0029 and 0042 e.g. enables the operations personnel to submit a problem query to the service facility and to search the service facility library; and historic log information; and problem-solution information exchanges may be completely automated for locating information needed to address specific problems or questions encountered by the user) from the remote medical device.

20. With respect to claim 16,

Babula further discloses programming instructions to enable the processor-based device to transmit results of the search of the database of solutions to medical device

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problems to a service provider via the network (Babula paragraph 0039 e.g. other network or communications schemes may be provided for enabling the service facility to communicate and exchange data and messages with diagnostic systems and remote service units).

21. With respect to claim 17,

The limitations therein have substantially the same scope as claim 14 because claim 17 is a computer program claim for implementing those steps of claim 14.

Therefore claim 17 is rejected for at least the same reasons as claim 14.

22. With respect to claims 18-19,

The limitations therein have substantially the same scope as claims 1-3.

Therefore claims 18-19 are rejected for at least the same reasons as claims 1-3.

23. With respect to claim 20,

Babula further discloses comprising programming instructions to enable the service provider to store the results (Babula paragraph 0001 e.g. transmitting search results to the diagnostic system, such as a scanner console or departmental PC where the user can then implement them) of the keyword search of the second database at the medical device.

24. With respect to claim 21,

Babula further discloses automatically providing the system with data to enable the system to identify a category (Babula paragraphs 0023, 0029 and 0054 e.g. Service requests and data transmitted between the systems and the service facility include data for identifying the type and modality of the serviced system, as well as data specifically

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adapted to the system modality and model; and the various service requests may be categorized by type, and associated with specific contract types, subscriber services, licenses, and so forth; and problem-solution information exchanges may be completely automated for locating information needed to address specific problems or questions encountered by the user) of medical devices that includes the specific medical device.

25. With respect to claim 22,

Babula further discloses wherein the application service provider directs the server system to automatically search the second database for at least one potential solution to a problem associated with the medical device (Babula paragraph 0029 e.g. problem-solution information exchanges may be completely automated for locating information needed to address specific problems or questions encountered by the user) using results obtained from the search of the first database and the data from the medical device (Babula paragraph 0047 and Fig. 7 e.g. With the system state remaining at its condition just prior to accessing the service request page, image data files, log files, error files, and so forth may be identified, captured, stored and transmitted to the service facility for evaluation of potential problems in the diagnostic system).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

26. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made

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to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

27. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

28. Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious by Babula as applied to claims 1-10 and 13-22 in view of Schramm-Apple et al (U.S. 2003/0217159 A1 hereinafter, "Schramm-Apple").

29. With respect to claim 12,

Although Babula substantially teaches the claimed invention, Babula does not explicitly indicate the capability of sending an e-mail message (Schramm-Apple paragraphs 0014 and 0083 e.g. learning about medical devices; e.g., e-mail questions and answers,) containing the at least one potential solution to a problem associated with the remote medical device (Schramm-Apple paragraphs 0014 and 0083 e.g. medical devices) to the service provider.

Schramm-Apple teaches the limitations as stated above.

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It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of medical device management, at the time of the present invention, having the teachings of Babula and Schramm-Apple before him/her, to modify the data categorization system of Babula, wherein the medical device management system would include the teachings of Schramm-Apple because that would have allowed the medical device management system to provide extensive information to physicians and healthcare providers electronically (Schramm-Apple paragraph 0032).

Response to Argument

30. On pages 8-10, Applicant argues that:

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-10 and 13-22 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as anticipated by Babula et al., U.S. Publication No. 2003/0061071. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Omitted Features of Independent Claims 1, 9, 13, 14, 17, 18, and 21

Turning now to the present claims, the Babula reference fails to disclose each element of independent claims 1, 9, 13, 14, 17, 18, and 21. For instance, independent claim 1 recites "a server system configured to receive data automatically transmitted from a medical device." (Emphasis added). Independent claims 9, 13, 14, 17, 18, and 21 recite generally similar subject matter. With respect to one embodiment, the present application notes: "The technique comprises automatically sending medical device data automatically to a service center." Application, page 1, lines 30-31 (emphasis added).

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And, that "the data may be a request for service containing medical imaging system data." Application, page 5, lines 5-6.

In contrast, the Babula reference only appears to disclose data exchanges initiated by a user. For example, in the Office Action mailed on September 2, 2009, the Examiner contended that Babula teaches "a server system operable to receive data automatically transmitted from a medical device" because paragraph 0015 and FIG. 6 of Babula disclose "an exemplary user interface page..., for placing service requests, and sending and receiving service data." Office Action, pages 14-15. However, because Babula teaches a user interface for initiating contact with the remote service facility, it does not appear to disclose automatically transmitting data from a medical device. Furthermore, while FIG. 6 of Babula displays a message labeled as an "automatic acknowledgment" of a service request, there is no indication that the service request was automatically transmitted from a medical device.

Examiner disagrees because:

Babula discloses a server system configured to receive data automatically transmitted from a medical device (Babula paragraphs 0015 and 0029 e.g. FIG. 6 is an exemplary user interface page incorporated in the diagnostic system for placing service requests, and sending and receiving service data between the diagnostic system and a remote service facility; and problem-solution information exchanges may be completely automated for locating information needed to address specific problems or questions encountered by the user [as a server system (e.g. a remote service facility) configured

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to receive data automatically (e.g. completely automated) transmitted from a medical device (e.g. the diagnostic system)]).

The disclosures reasonably describe the argued limitation of "a server system operable to receive data automatically transmitted from a medical device".

31. On page 10, Applicant argues that:

Furthermore, the Examiner appears to contend that the present claims are anticipated by Babula even if Babula does not disclose automatically transmitting data from a remote medical device because "broadly providing an automatic or mechanical means to replace a manual activity which accomplished the same result is not sufficient to distinguish over the prior art." Office Action, page 15 (citing *In re Venner*, 262 F.2d 91, 120 U.S.P.Q. 193 (C.C.P.A. 1958)). However, the claims at issue in *In re Venner* were rejected as being an obvious combination of multiple references. The Examiner has failed to indicate how the holding of a case decided on the issue of obviousness is applicable to the present anticipation rejections. Furthermore, the Examiner has failed to explain how the present claims directed toward systems and methods configured to electronically receive and process data from a medical device may be considered a "manual activity." Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner clarify the rejection based on *In re Venner*, or withdraw the rejection.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and allowance of claims 1-10 and 13-22.

Examiner disagrees because:

The following is a quotation of MPEP 2144.04:

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III. AUTOMATING A MANUAL ACTIVITY

In re Venner, 262 F.2d 91, 95, 120 USPQ 193, 194 (CCPA 1958) (Appellant argued that claims to a permanent mold casting apparatus for molding trunk pistons were allowable over the prior art because the claimed invention combined “old permanent-mold structures together with a timer and solenoid which automatically actuates the known pressure valve system to release the inner core after a predetermined time has elapsed.” The court held that broadly providing an automatic or mechanical means to replace a manual activity which accomplished the same result is not sufficient to distinguish over the prior art.).

According to MPEP 2144.04 [R-6] Legal Precedent as Source of Supporting Rationale, MPEP 2144.04 III AUTIMATING MANUAL ACTIVITY provides a supporting rationale as “simply automating a manual procedure which accomplished the same result is not sufficient to distinguish over the prior art (e.g. Babula)” regardless to what type (anticipation rejections or obviousness rejections) of rejections.

Accordingly, the rejection of claims 1 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by Babula is proper.

Conclusion

32. Accordingly, THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

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the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to SyLing Yen whose telephone number is 571-270-1306.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Hosain Alam can be reached at 571-272-3978. The fax and phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 571-272-2100.

SyLing Yen
Examiner
Art Unit 2166

/Syling Yen/

March 7, 2010

/Hosain T Alam/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2166